

Virginia Naturally School Recognition Program Criteria

To receive a plaque, first year schools need to complete activities that fall in the top 4 categories. Additional requirements will be added each year a school participates in the program, see individual year applications.

1. **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:** There are measurable indicators of administrative support for conservation and environmental education programs. Indicators vary with the number of years the school participates. The administration should support field experiences and continued in-service related to natural resources. Levels of support **may** include:
 - The scheduling of EE in-service workshops for staff.
 - The conservation and environmental-related state standards are part of overall school goals.
 - Support for staffs' efforts to include EE in their curriculum.
 - Majority of school is involved in conservation and environmental education efforts.
 2. **STAFF DEVELOPMENT/ CURRICULUM INTEGRATION:** **High Quality Professional Development** that supports the integration of Conservation and Environmental Education into the core areas of the curriculum such as:
 - The environmental-related objectives found in the VA Standards of Learning constitute a critical focus in the overall curriculum of the school.
 - Each year, the school schedules personnel from public and/or private conservation or resource agencies to serve as classroom or assembly speakers, site consultants, or in-service or curriculum workshop leaders.
 - Training on integrating Outdoor gardens and /or outdoor lab sites as part of the overall program at all grade levels.
 3. **RESOURCE CONSERVATION:** School has an action plan for the reduction of and the conservation of resources including:
 - Energy and water conservation audits are conducted on an annual basis.
 - The school participates in school and/or community recycling programs.
 - The environmental health of the students, teachers and community is considered as part of the plan.
 4. **MEANINGFUL FIELD EXPERIENCES:** The students are involved in grade level appropriate field experiences as defined by the Chesapeake Bay Agreement www.chesapeakebay.net For example:
 - Group has an official school or community-based project.
 - Students are involved in field investigations on and/or off the school grounds.
 - Student driven action projects and activities are supported and encouraged.
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Additional year recognitions require that schools also meet one or more of the criteria listed below –see application for details

5. LIBRARY, EQUIPMENT RESOURCES: Additional resources have been made available to support conservation and environmental education efforts. *For example:*

- The school maintains an inventory of up-to-date print and manipulative Environmental Education resource materials for teachers and students,
- The school maintains an inventory of appropriate equipment for field observations and environmental monitoring such as field guides, insect nets and other field equipment.

6. INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING OR OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS: The school recognizes that conservation and environmental education may take place outside of the classroom. *For example:*

- The school grounds or nature area are developed in a manner that they provide for wildlife and are used for outdoor studies
- The school maintains an inventory of animals and plants growing on the school grounds, and has a long-term plan for increasing species diversity.
- School grounds Maintenance and Custodial staff are involved with the planning and implementation of the school's environmental program.

7. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT:

- School works with a diversity of partners such as the PTA, civic groups, school alumni, parks, and corporations to support programs either with volunteers, materials or financial assistance.
- School develops a long-term strategy for community involvement.